



Socio-economic effects of inter-ethnic conflicts on communities living around Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Inter-ethnic conflicts are common worldwide. One of the main reasons of inter-ethnic conflicts in Africa is negative ethnicity. In Kubasali escarpment Luhya Ethnic group in Kakamega County have been in conflict with their neighbors the Nandi from Nandi County for a long time over destruction of property, land ownership, land boundary, political and resource use disputes. The inter-ethnic conflicts between the two ethnic groups have been reoccurring frequently despite regular interventions by various stakeholders since independence, affecting socio-economic development in Kakamega and Nandi Counties. The study aimed at assessing the socio-economic effects of inter-ethnic conflicts on communities living around Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties. The study was based on the Interpretivism philosophical approach of research. The study population comprised; 32 Assistant-chiefs, 8 Ward Administrators, 16 NGOs Officials, 24 Religious Leaders, 4 Deputy County Commissioners, 8 Assistant County Commissioners, 4 Sub-County Administrators, 18 Council of elders, 40 Police Officers, 24 Village Elders, 16 Chiefs, 8 Members of County Assembly, 18 Victims, 16 Perpetrators and 384 Households Heads totaling to 620. The study employed descriptive design. Classical theory of economic growth guided this research. The study employed simple random, systematic random, census, purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Fisher's formula for determining sample size of Household heads was employed. Primary data collection was done using questionnaires, Interviews schedules, Observations checklists and Focus group discussion guides. Secondary sources included relevant documents and reports. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic narratives; Quantitative data was analyzed using statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). The results indicated that, disruption of learning, loss of property, loss of lives, stalled development projects and loss of livelihood are the socio-economic effects of inter-ethnic conflicts in the study area. The study concludes that, Inter-ethnic conflicts have got a negative influence on the socio-economic development in the study area. The study recommends that, a study should be conducted on the alternative dispute resolutions such as conciliation, reconciliation and civil disobedience to provide everlasting solutions of peace in the study area. The study recommends improved working relationship between the local residents, NGOs, civil society and the ethnic groups to make peace initiatives more effective and address various concerns of the ethnic groups to mitigate occurrences of inter-ethnic conflicts in the study area.

Keywords: Conflict, Conflict Resolution, Development, Inter-Ethnic Conflict, Kubasali Escarpment, Socio-Economic Development

I. INTRODUCTION

The world's inter-ethnic disputes are largely attributed to ethnic differences; as a result, it is crucial to promote peace by encouraging the growth of positive human relationships that transcend racial, religious, class, and ethnic lines (Kamoet, 2011). When two or more parties, or even nations, have fundamentally different priorities, ideologies, or ways of looking at the world, it can lead to violent confrontations. One of the biggest worldwide crises that endanger human existence and socio-economic growth is conflicts, both within and between states and communities. As a result of violent conflict, state institutions are weakened, a parallel economy emerges, and certain populations face periodic life-threatening conditions, all of which impact socio-economic growth. It is necessary to have a deeper understanding of the challenges encountered by conflict-affected populations, the limitations they encounter in sustaining their livelihoods, and the means by which they can overcome these obstacles, according to a review of livelihoods approaches (Losey, 2011).

Richmond (2001) states that the central regions of Somalia have a long history of conflicts that have been worsened by the country's civil war, lack of a government, and restricted access to resources, socio-economic development, and livelihood opportunities. The central regions of Somalia appear to be in a state of constant war due

to a lack of focus on addressing and effectively resolving the causes of conflict as well as peace building processes aimed at preventing conflict. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola are two examples of conflicts where the probability of casualties is constant (Lewer, 1999). As a result, household asset bases were reduced, social services were lacking, and trade conditions were unfavorable (Thania, 2003). On the other hand, conflict is detrimental to a society's socioeconomic development and is thus more than merely a sociological problem. As a result, areas ravaged by war often see a precipitous decline in socio-economic growth, leaving them worse off than before the conflict.

The largest number of people affected by war lives in Africa which is home to almost 11% of the global population, as an example, the United Nations Security Council has noted that, compared to other regions of the globe, Africa consumes at least 75% of its resources when it comes to conflicts and humanitarian operations. Recent events and research on ethnic conflicts in Kenya and Horn of Africa point to the fact that psychological trauma, such as fears and suspicion, is difficult for women and children to overcome, even after the conflicts have subsided (Matanga, 2010).

Northern and Eastern part of Kakamega County and Nandi north and Chesumei in Nandi County have been hit hard by inter-ethnic disputes. The Luhya and Nandi populations in the two counties share a boundary in Kubasali escarpment and they have always been involved in conflicts, which has affected the socio-economic development in both Kakamega and Nandi counties. The Nandi and Luhya communities have a history of mutual raids over cattle, land, and crop destruction, dating back to pre-colonial times. Land ownership and boundary disputes remain central to the conflicts, with each community asserting ancestral claims over contested territories. Competition over resources such as land, jobs, and access to services fuels inter-ethnic conflicts (Curia, 2010).

The Nandi take part in cattle keeping and the Luhya are crop and animal farmers. They are located on opposite sides of the Kubasali escarpment. The Nandi and Luhya ethnic groups share a border in the two counties that divides Nandi from Kakamega. Land boundaries, grazing areas, and intentional crop destruction have all been points of contention between the two ethnic groups for a long time according to National Land Commission Report of 2021. Disputes inevitably emerge whenever Nandi livestock trample Luhya crops. Another source of contention is the fact that, the Nandi people refuse to let the Luhya people farm on the escarpment, citing concerns that, the land belongs to them and that, this could have an impact on the economies of Kakamega and Nandi counties. Forty people were killed and one hundred and twenty-two displaced in a conflict that occurred in 1992 (Mwaura, 2005).

Conflicts between the two ethnic groups in 2015 also resulted in the deaths of twenty people and destruction of seventy acres of crops. These conflicts led to displacement of 600 people from their homes. The conflicts in Kakamega and Nandi counties were temporarily resolved through a series of peace meetings organized by the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, which included representatives from civil society, the national administration, and the disputing parties. Later on, the violence in these counties resumed and up to date there is no peace in Kubasali escarpment according to Kakamega County Security Report of 2021.

Nonetheless, ethnic tensions between the two groups persist to date, impacting people's ability to make a living hence, affecting socio-economic development in Kubasali escarpment. This calls for studies to identify causes of conflict and develop strategies to reduce them, so that, Kakamega and Nandi Counties can move forward economically and socially. Furthermore, there has been scant investigation into the subject of inter-ethnic conflicts, despite their persistence and complexity since the early 1990s. Research into this issue is crucial due to the prevalence of violent inter-ethnic conflicts and the havoc they wreak on human safety and welfare. Concurrently, there is still a lot on the ground to cover in terms of comprehending the causes, consequences, and potential solutions to the inter-ethnic conflicts that exist between the Nandi and the Luhya. Thus, this study aims to interrogate the influence of inter-ethnic conflicts in Kubasali escarpment on socio-economic development in Kakamega and Nandi Counties, focusing on the Kubasali escarpment and the Nandi and Luhya people.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Constant conflicts between Nandi and Luhya ethnic groups have been going on for a long time. The main points of contention include boundary dispute, grazing land disputes, cattle theft, crop destruction dispute and struggle for farming land in the Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega North, Kakamega East, Nandi North and Chesumei Sub-counties. The Nandi and Luhya communities have a history of mutual raids over cattle, land, and crop destruction, dating back to pre-colonial times. Land ownership and boundary disputes remain central to the conflicts, with each community asserting ancestral claims over contested territories. Competition over resources such as land, jobs, and access to services fuels inter-ethnic conflicts, pursuant to Kakamega County Security Report of 2022. As a result, these confrontations have caused significant property damage, displacement of persons, and loss of lives. On top of that, it has caused people both bodily and psychological harm.

Conflicts in the study area have persisted despite efforts by State and Non-State Actors to mitigate the problem through security measures, such as holding peace-building meetings with local communities and utilizing local authorities to mediate these conflicts. However, the conflicts have continued to persist. This could be because the mitigation efforts have neglected to address the root causes of the conflicts and have instead focused on Band-Aid

solutions. Concurrently, there is still a lot on the ground to cover in terms of comprehending the causes, consequences, and potential solutions to the inter-ethnic conflicts that exist between the Nandi and the Luhya ethnic group which affect their socio-economic development.

The conflicts have long put the two counties' socio-economic development at risk. The Conflicts are major obstacles to socio-economic growth. Another source of contention is the fact that, the Nandi people refuse to let the Luhya people farm on the escarpment, citing concerns that, the land belongs to them and that, this has an impact on the economies of Kakamega and Nandi counties. Forty people were killed and one hundred and twenty-two displaced in a conflict that occurred in 1992 in the study area (Kagwanja, 2003). It is because of this that, it was necessary to conduct a research to interrogate the extent to which these conflicts influence the socio-economic development in Kakamega and Nandi Counties, bearing in mind that, people's livelihoods are normally affected by the persistent inter-ethnic conflicts between the two ethnic groups.

1.2 Research Objectives

Assess socio-economic effects of inter-ethnic conflicts on communities living around Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi Counties.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

This research was guided by the Classical Theory of Economic Growth

2.1.1 The Classical Theory of Economic Growth

Donald J. Harris in 1988 formulated his theory by examining the initial phases of industrial capitalism in Britain. Classical economists were proficient in elucidating the primary determinants of economic growth and the mechanisms that facilitate its occurrence (Burton, 1990). The main driving force was the gathering and efficient distribution of a share of the excess generated by society, in the form of profits. Thus, variations in the rate of profit played a vital role in analyzing the economy's long-term growth. Ricardo's study in 1817 shows that in a closed economy, there is an inevitable tendency for the rate of profit to decrease (Burton, 1990). The essential features of the traditional analysis of the accumulation process are introduced and explained within the framework of a basic model.

Political economy was a conscious endeavor to establish a scientific rationale for the forces that regulate the operation of the economic system, the particular processes implicated in the observed transformations, and the enduring patterns and outcomes that these transformations were causing. The classical economists' fascination with economic growth was driven by their philosophical preoccupation with the notion of 'progress', which they believed necessitated the advancement of the material underpinnings of society (Boutros, 1992). Progress was initially conceived with the aim of protecting private property and, as a result, the interests of the wealthy class. From this perspective, their objective was to prove that the use of human initiative within a framework of unrestricted competition to promote individual objectives would result in beneficial outcomes for society as a whole. The resolution of conflicting economic interests among different groups can be achieved through the operation of competitive market forces and the judicious intervention of a "responsible" government. Through their work in economic analysis, the classical economists were able to provide a precise explanation of the various factors that influence economic growth and the fundamental mechanisms of the growth process. An important achievement was their recognition that the accumulation and efficient allocation of a portion of the social output is the main driver of economic growth. Within the framework of capitalism, this primarily takes the form of reinvesting earnings (Cramer, 2006). The study is linked to the theory embracing the social economic development in the study area through land ownership, land use, improvement of social amenities and social groups.

The key critiques of Classical Economic Growth Theory are: Neglect of Technological Innovation in that, Classical theorists largely ignored the role of technological change in driving sustained growth and this is what is experienced in the study area where the residents lack technological skills among the youth for self-employment who are mostly involved in inter-ethnic conflicts. Modern growth models like the Solow-Swan Model and Endogenous Growth Theory by Romer, 1986, incorporate technological progress as a central factor in long-term growth. Malthus argued that population growth would outpace food supply, leading to poverty and stagnation. Classical theory treats key growth factors (like technology and innovation) as exogenous outside the economic model while this approach doesn't explain why or how these changes occur (Lederach, 1997).

Modern theories (e.g., endogenous growth theory) argue that investment in human capital, research, and innovation are internal to the economy and policy-sensitive. Classical theory doesn't consider how institutions, governance, education, and infrastructure shape economic growth whereas modern institutional economics shows that rule of law, property rights, and political stability are crucial for long-term development (Lederach, 1997). This is not

embraced in the study since there is a lot of destruction of property, political disputes and loss of lives leading to poor socio-economic development in the study area.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Effects of Inter-ethnic Conflicts on Socio-economic Development

Conflicts have several negative socio-economic and political consequences as outlined in the literature review.

Populations are Displaced: In 2009, the disputes within the Kuria community led to a significant number of people being forced to leave their homes. The June 2009 report from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), states that around 6,290 individuals were forced to leave their homes. The source cited is from OCHA in 2009. As a consequence, IDP camps were established in Kegonga and Ntimaru divisions, while other individuals migrated to the adjacent country of Tanzania. These camps were primarily located in the central economic hubs and religious institutions. The lack of essential utilities such as potable water, nourishment, and hygienic sanitation facilities resulted in their susceptibility to contagious illnesses due to overcrowding. Furthermore, the victims experience psychological distress as a consequence of the conflict. Among the displaced individuals were also entrepreneurs from different regions who had made investments in the district (Kagwanja, 2003). However, as a result of the fighting and displacement, they were compelled to shut down their enterprises and depart. The impact of refugees on hosting communities includes the transmission of infectious diseases and limited availability of clean water and food. This is particularly notable in cases of malaria, as refugees' migration routes expose them to higher risks of infection, and their housing in camps often lacks adequate treatment. Additionally, both children and young- and middle-aged adults of both genders are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS (Haider, 2009).

Students in conflict-affected nations have a twofold higher likelihood of dying or being displaced before completing their studies compared to children in other low-income countries. Refugees and internally displaced individuals encounter significant obstacles to accessing education, and countries afflicted by violence exhibit substantial gender disparities and exceptionally low levels of literacy. In 2019, a significant number of individuals were forcefully killed in Matungu Sub-County, located in Kakamega County. As a result, many people were forced to leave their homes and seek refuge in schools for their own protection, according to the Kakamega County security report of that year. Nevertheless, we continue to see similar homicides, particularly targeting security guards and other individuals in shopping centres who are assassinated by unidentified perpetrators during the night. Therefore, more research is required in Kubasali escarpment to determine the underlying factors and develop effective strategies to address the issue of destruction of property in the study area for socio-economic development.

Effects on Learning: The conflicts led to the closure of educational facilities, including both primary and secondary schools. The inter-ethnic conflicts within the Kuria community led to the closure of schools, resulting in a decrease in school attendance. This decline in attendance subsequently led to a decrease in academic achievement, as seen by the lower KCSE and KCPE results at several schools within the district. Nevertheless, as a result of the existing state of tranquility in the district, it is anticipated that there would be an enhancement in academic achievements and a rise in the number of students enrolling in the schools (Ayofe, 2009). Nigeria is facing threats from extreme groups like Boko Haram, who have gained notoriety for their high-profile kidnappings and abductions of school girls in Chibok. In addition to the meagre financial allocation from the government, the Boko Haram insurgency has impeded educational progress in Nigeria (Englebert & Tull, 2008). Due to concerns about potential attacks, some parents have chosen to remove their children from schools in a region that is already the most educationally disadvantaged in Nigeria. As hostilities in Kubasali escarpment continue to worsen, this situation is exacerbating the existing knowledge gaps and encourages further studies to restore peace so that learning process can be enhanced in the study area.

Incidents targeting education and educational institutions are prevalent worldwide, both within and outside of armed conflict scenarios. Armed factions such as Boko Haram deliberately focus their attacks on educational institutions, educators, and students in numerous conflicts. These attacks not only infringe against the rights of children but also expose them to the dangers of injury and death. Furthermore, they hinder pupils' ability to attend education. Incidents of violence targeting schools, educators, and students can significantly reduce school attendance rates among children, and in some cases, lead to complete dropout. Furthermore, such attacks can compel schools to reduce their operating hours and result in the destruction of school infrastructure and educational resources (Flemming, 2006). Environments characterized by violence and terror significantly undermine the quality of children's schooling and overall educational levels. According to Maja (2009), attacks against education facilities and schools involve a wide variety of crimes that endanger children and prevent them from accessing education. This includes acts of aggression towards school facilities, teachers, and students; the seizure of schools by armed gangs, police, and military forces; the persistent intimidation, coercion, and even murder of teachers, parents, and students; and the enlistment of children from schools into armed factions.

In today's highly competitive and demanding environment, school administrators are under pressure to use creative management strategies aimed at enhancing teaching and learning outcomes, as evidenced by improved

academic performance of students. Nevertheless, in Mandera County, school managers have even greater challenges in improving performance. The region is particularly susceptible to disputes between tribes, political difficulties, and the terrorism threat stemming from its proximity to Somalia and the Al-Shabaab group (Séverine, 2008). However, the issue of teachers being targeted in attacks continues to persist, necessitating further investigation to address the situation. Inter-ethnic conflicts have always disrupted learning process in Kubasali escarpment by displacing people during the conflicts. This creates a knowledge gap for the research on how these conflicts can be mitigated to pave way for smooth learning process in schools within the study area.

Effects on Businesses: Broeck (2009) reported that unrest led to the cessation of business operations in the district. Several shops stayed closed due to the absence of significant activity caused by the fighting. Furthermore, the absence of a supply chain to companies was due to the barricading of some highways by marauding teenagers from both clans, which hindered the flow of people and commodities within the district. Moreover, the investors who first invested in the area departed, resulting in the district missing out on potential economic prospects that would have arisen had the investors remained. Discrimination based on clans resulted in the loss of potential business prospects. Investors from adjacent clans were unable to invest due to the on-going warfare.

Government of Kenya (2019) reported that businesses in Kakamega County have been devastated. They urged the government to assist in these on-going conflicts. Additionally, a ward administrator from East Wanga ward, who was also a key source, corroborated the results that disagreements result in the loss of property. They specifically referenced an incidence in Emakhwale Sub-location where 10 houses were completely burned down. However, it was also shown in the Maraba FGD that out of the 8 participants, 7 of them stated that disputes had resulted in the destruction of property, particularly in shopping centres, namely shops. The findings clearly demonstrate that property destruction occurs as a consequence of disputes in the study area. However, Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties still experience negative effects on businesses hence, creating a gap for further research.

Loss of Lives and Property: Amidst periods of violence, there is a significant loss of human lives. Casualties occur during conflicts between competing clans. The 2009 inter-ethnic violence resulted in an indeterminate number of fatalities. Moreover, fatalities occurred when bands of young men ventured out to carry out cattle robberies. The loss of lives resulted in the community being deprived of important human resources during the most productive stage of life. Furthermore, a significant amount of property was lost due to the deliberate act of setting houses on fire. A significant number of residences were set on fire during the incident, leading to substantial losses (Kamoet, 2011). There are nomadic communities living in more than 21 nations throughout Africa. Several pastoralist communities are impacted by conflicts, particularly in the East Africa region where there are on-going inter-pastoral violent conflicts. These conflicts have the potential to significantly impair the livelihoods of these groups (Mair, 2009). Pastoralism is a significant economic production technique in which individuals rear herds of animals, primarily in arid and semi-arid regions. Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) comprise approximately 80% of Kenya's land area and provide sustenance for one-third of the country's human population and 72% of its national livestock herd.

Raiding is a method used by groups to express their animosity towards hostile communities (Maynard, 2004). Historically, livestock raiding typically entailed limited and controllable acts of violence and robbery, targeting the highest quality livestock or replacing animals that were lost due to droughts or diseases. Nevertheless, in recent times, the prevalence of modern weaponry, commercialization of livestock theft, banditry, political instigation, disputes over land ownership, and cultural traditions have led to the widespread, advanced, increasingly violent, and damaging practice of raiding among pastoral communities in the northern regions of Kenya (Moe, 2010). The widespread distribution of contemporary firearms has been extensively recorded as having a detrimental impact on the magnitude and consequences of armed conflict within pastoral groups (Mkutu 2008). Furthermore, the practice of commercialized cattle raiding, including affluent merchants, politicians, traders, and local individuals, has disrupted pastoral livelihoods and exacerbated disputes amongst pastoral groups (Mwamba, 2010). Loss of lives and property has been experienced in Kubasali escarpment frequently during inter-ethnic conflicts hence, creating a gap to come up with effective strategies of managing these conflicts to reduce loss of lives and property in the study area for socio-economic development.

Destruction of Political Systems: Ochodo (2000) states that Devastating impacts on national political systems are caused by complex and violent conflicts. It changes power relations and national political systems, causes communities to become more antagonistic and divided, and eliminates or changes traditional political institutions. During civil conflicts, authority and wealth are distributed according to who is impacted or spared. This distribution sometimes follows divisions based on ethnicity or area. For example, when the well-off steal from the poor or when a group's ability to enjoy basic human rights is limited due to poverty, political inequalities become even more pronounced and conflict becomes more inevitable. With limited international resources being directed toward relief operations, peacekeeping, and reconstruction, democratic institutions are weakened when war limits civil liberties and the freedom of the press (Mwamba, 2010). During inter-ethnic conflicts in Kubasali escarpment, there has been destruction of political systems between the Luhya and Nandi ethnic groups creating knowledge gap on how these ethnic groups can come together and how they can work together to improve on political systems in the study area.

2.2.2 Prejudice and Social Discrimination towards the Competing Out-group

Conflicts of interest can result in intergroup threats and hatred. When resources are few, groups with negative views towards their rivals must compete for them. Conflict is a multifaceted phenomenon that has had a role in diminishing the capacity of local communities to anticipate, manage, and bounce back from climatic pressures. Communities that are impacted by drought frequently relocate to different regions in order to find new grazing land and sources of water (Moe, 2010).

Population migrations, which occur both inside administrative boundaries and beyond international borders, can exert significant strain on resources, which are frequently already limited. This can lead to violent conflicts between farmers and pastoralist groups and clans, as noted by Ohiorhenuan (2009). For many years, this region has faced a persistent problem of inter and intra communal violence due to disputes over water and grazing land between pastoralist communities. The availability of weapons and ammunition has greatly contributed to the violence, and the State Security has been unable to protect civilians or prevent the illegal distribution of these weapons.

Okoth and Ogot (2008) stated that the issue of resources in South Sudan is exacerbated by two primary factors: an economy that lacks diversity and governance that is still plagued by competition. Land is widely regarded as the most plentiful resource in South Sudan. Several academics have observed connections between war and property ownership in the Country. The land issue encompasses two facets: the utilization of land by huge multinational corporations and the coexistence of the traditional land tenure system with the current land use system. Disputes concerning land access occur among family members, communities, pastoralists, farmers, traditional communities, and returning individuals from Sudan.

Maynard (2004) posited that intergroup contact, which fosters the potential for friendship, is a promising avenue for mitigating prejudice and discrimination, which frequently give rise to conflicts. However, this issue has not received adequate attention for a considerable period of time. Prejudice and social discrimination has continued to persist between the Nandi and Luhya ethnic groups in Kubasali escarpment creating a knowledge gap for a research to come up with ways of reducing discrimination for socio-economic development in the study area.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Descriptive and historical research designs were implemented in this study. Descriptive research design is a systematic method of data collection that involves the administration of questionnaires or interviews to a representative sample of individuals, as defined by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). The authors contend that a descriptive survey can be implemented to acquire information about the attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, or societal issues of individuals. This investigated the social issue of inter-ethnic conflicts in Kakamega and Nandi Counties. A descriptive design is a technique that is employed to collect data from individuals within a population in order to examine the current state of the population in relation to one or more variables, as defined by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). The researcher employed a descriptive approach in this study to accurately depict the conflicts in Kakamega and Nandi Counties and their impact on socio-economic development in the study area.

In contrast, evaluation research is implemented to determine the outcomes of a social intervention. A social intervention is a deliberate action that is conducted within a social environment with the intention of attaining a particular result. Evaluation research investigates the impact of a particular program on a specific social issue that the program is designed to address. Historical research design was used because the study period was since 1992 to date but inter-ethnic conflicts still reoccur. This applied to objectives one and three of the study. Thus it examined the nature and extent of inter-ethnic conflicts in Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties and Mechanisms mitigating inter-ethnic conflicts in Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties.

3.2 Study Area

Kakamega County is located in Kenya. The population of the area in 2019 was 1,867,579, consisting of 897,133 males, 970,409 females, and 40 individuals who identify as intersex. The area measures 3,033.8 square kilometres. Kakamega County is located in the western region of Kenya. Kakamega County consists of 12 Sub-Counties. Specifically, the constituencies are Mumias East, Mumias West, Matungu, Navakholo, Butere, Kakamega South, Likuyani, Lugari, Kakamega East (Shinyalu), Kakamega North (Malava), Khwisero, and Kakamega Central. The investigation was conducted in the Kakamega North and East Sub Counties, as well as the Nandi North and Chesumei Sub-Counties, which are the ancestral homes of the two contending ethnic groups.

Nandi County is located in the North Rift region of Kenya, spans an area of 2,884.4 square kilometres. According to the 2019 census, the county has a population of 885,711 individuals, with the majority belonging to the Nandi ethnic group. Nandi county is geographically characterized by its distinctive jug-shaped structure, with its southern boundary being the Equator and extending northwards to latitude 0034'N. The western boundary stretches

towards the west. Nandi Hills predominantly encompass the primary areas of the county. The economic activities encompass extensive cultivation of maize, tea, coffee, sugarcane, pyrethrum, and dairy farming. The majority of individuals in the Nandi community are engaged in pastoralist farming, which serves as their primary cultural practice. The county consists of six sub-counties, each of which is also a constituency. Specifically, the regions are Mosop (Nandi North), Aldai, Emgwen, Chesumei, Tinderet, and Nandi Hills.

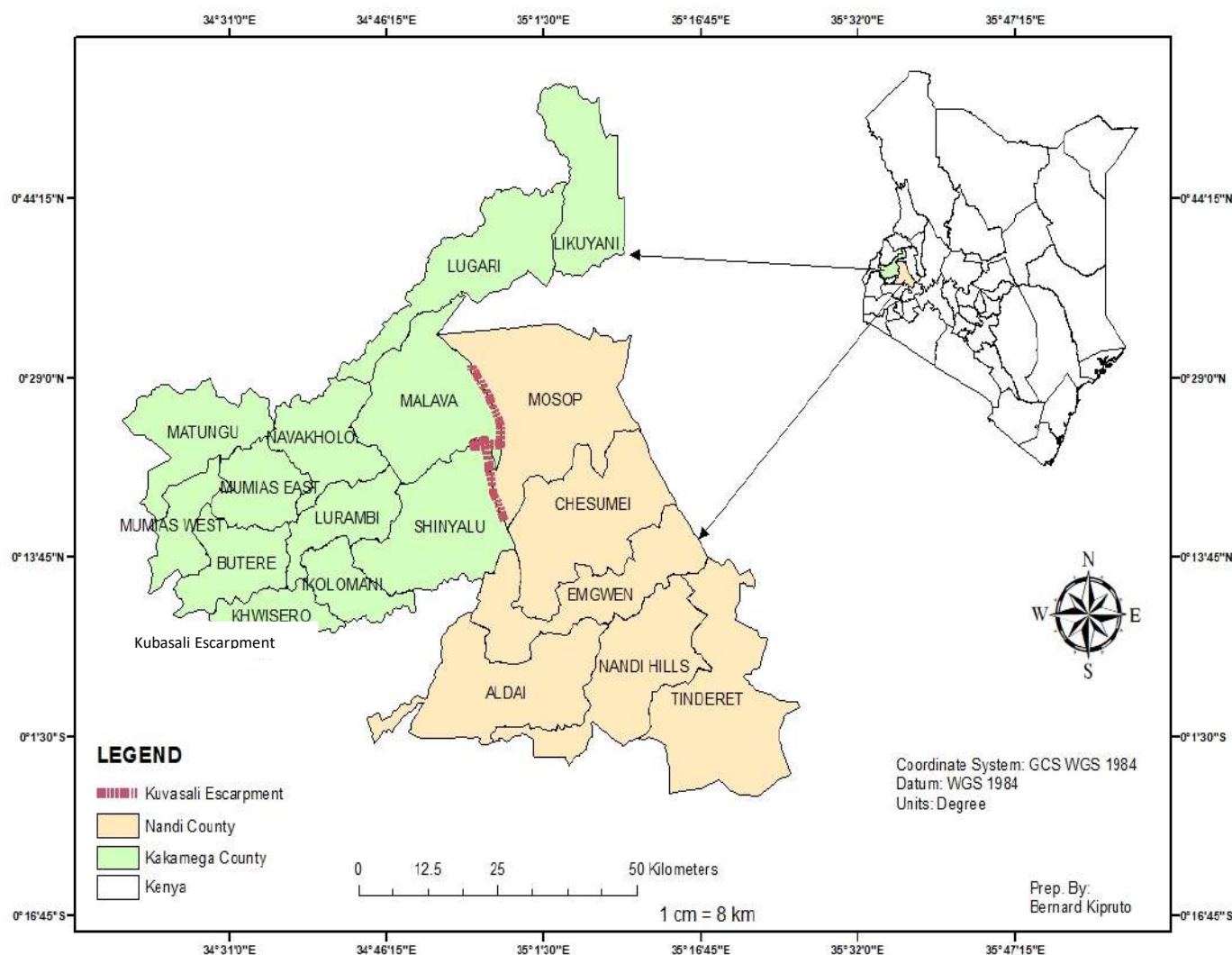


Figure1
Maps of Kakamega and Nandi Counties, Kenya

3.3 Study Population

Kakamega County has a population of 1,867,579 individuals and 433,207 households, whereas Nandi County has a population of 885,711 individuals and 199,426 households, according to the 2019 census. The study focused on households as the target group. The households of four specific sub-counties were selected: Kakamega North (Malava) 51,083 and Kakamega East (Shinyalu) 39,589 in Kakamega County, and Nandi North (Mosop) 34,328 and Chesumei 32,050 in Nandi County totalling to 157,050 households. The participants were chosen based on their emphasis on intervention and their goal is to prevent disputes, engage in proactive intervention after conflicts have taken place, or engage in reactive intervention. The respondent groups were sampled due to their possession of vital knowledge and experience pertaining to Conflicts resolution. Each professional group approaches problems from different perspectives, based on how they choose to define the individuals responsible for those conflicts. The purpose was to provide crucial insights into the causes of conflicts and the connection between causal explanations and interventions. The study aimed to expand the breadth of the literature review's reliability by incorporating diverse professional perspectives on Conflicts.

The population consisted of 157,050 households, 80 police officers, 16 chiefs, 32 assistant chiefs, 8 members of the county assembly, 8 assistant county commissioners, 4 deputy county commissioners, 4 sub-county administrators, 8 ward administrators, 240 village elders, 18 council of elders, 48 NGOs officials, 180 victims of inter-ethnic conflicts,

16 perpetrators of inter-ethnic conflicts and 240 religious leaders totalling to 157,970. I selected the aforementioned responders because they are the individuals who mediate, reconcile the wrongdoers following confrontations, and are crucial stakeholders in the socio-economic development of the community. The target population consisted of the household heads from the local community who were questioned using questionnaires. The Fisher's formula was employed to ascertain the sample size of household heads from the overall population of 157,050 households (census, 2019).

Table 1
Study Population

S/N	Population	Population Size	Population for Kakamega North and East Sub-counties in Kakamega County		Population for Nandi North and Chesumei Sub-counties in Nandi County	
			Kakamega North	Kakamega East	Nandi North	Chesumei
1.	Religious Leaders	240	60	60	60	60
2.	Household Heads	157,050	51, 083	39, 589	34,328	32,050
3.	NGOs Officials	48	12	12	12	12
4.	Ass-Chiefs	32	8	8	8	8
5.	Ward Administrators	8	2	2	2	2
6.	Council of elders	36	9	9	9	9
7.	Chiefs	16	4	4	4	4
8.	Assistant county commissioners	8	2	2	2	2
9.	Deputy county commissioners	4	1	1	1	1
10.	Police Officers	80	20	20	20	20
11.	Members of county assembly	8	2	2	2	2
12.	Village elders	240	60	60	60	60
13.	Sub-County Administrators.	4	1	1	1	1
14.	Victims of inter-ethnic conflicts	180	45	45	45	45
15.	Perpetrators of inter-ethnic conflicts	16	4	4	4	4
TOTAL		157,970	51,313	39,819	34,558	32,280

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The sampling techniques applied were; Simple random sampling, systematic Random sampling, Purposive sampling, Snowball and Census. The scientific approach used to generate the sample sizes for each of the categories was Statistical formula by use of percentages.

3.4.1 Sampling Household Heads

The study site consists of 4 Sub-Counties that were selected based on the incidence of conflicts in Kakamega and Nandi counties. Fisher's formula for sample size determination (Fisher et al., 1983; cited in Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003) was used to determine a sample of the group of household heads who were the unit of analysis.

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where n=desired sample size (the target population is greater than 10,000).

z=the standard normal deviate at the confidence level of 95% is 1.96.

p=the proportion of the target population estimated to have characteristics being measured is set at 50%

q=1-p (probability of non-success)

d=level of statistical significance set at 0.05

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 * 0.5 * (1 - 0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 384$$

The sample was drawn from a total population of 433,207 households in Kakamega County and 199,426 households in Nandi County, as reported in the 2010 Census. Simple random sampling was employed to establish the appropriate number of home units to be sampled per Sub-county. This approach was necessary due to the variability in the number of household units as seen in Table 2).

3.4.2 Sampling of Key Informants

The key informants were sampled as follows; 40 out of 80 police officers were sampled through purposive sampling, 16 out of 16 chiefs were sampled through census sampling, 32 out of 32 assistant chiefs were sampled through census sampling, 8 out of 8 members of county assembly were sampled through census sampling, 8 out of 8 assistant county commissioners were sampled through census sampling, 4 out of 4 deputy county commissioners were sampled through census sampling, 4 out of 4 sub-county administrators were sampled through census sampling, 8 out of 8 ward administrators were sampled through purposive sampling, 18 out of 180 victims of inter-ethnic conflicts were sampled through systematic random sampling, 16 out of 16 perpetrators of inter-ethnic conflicts were sampled through snowballing totaling to 120 key informants.

3.4.3 Sampling of Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were sampled as follows; 24 out of 240 village elders were sampled through random sampling, 18 out of the 36 council of elders were sampled through census sampling, 16 out of 48 NGOs officials were sampled through purposive sampling, and 24 out of 240 religious leaders were sampled random sampling totalling to 116 participants. The composition of FGDs was as follows; 2 FGDs for Council of elders consisting of 9 members each; 2 FGDs for Non-governmental organization officials consisting of 8 members each; 3 FGDs for Village elders consisting of 8 members each and 3 FGDs for Religious leaders consisting of 8 members each, totaling to 10 FGDs. All the respondents totaled to 620.

3.5 Methods and Instruments of Data Collection

The study collected both primary and secondary data. When utilizing primary sources, data was gathered from chosen participants through the use of questionnaires, interview schedules, observation checklists, and focus group discussions. The project incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) recommend utilizing both methodologies together in fundamental research as the optimal method to obtain adequate findings.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

A hybrid questionnaire consisting of both open-ended and closed-ended questions was administered. The reason for this was that close-ended questionnaires are more convenient to analyse as they were readily available for usage, and each question could be accompanied by multiple answer options. Open-ended questions provided for a comprehensive and detailed response, where the respondent was given the freedom to provide a personal answer, often including the reasons behind their response. The researcher favours using this method due to its efficiency in gathering information from respondents in a short period. Furthermore, the household heads were provided with an opportunity to refer to records in order to ensure that sensitive inquiries are answered honestly.

3.5.2 Interview schedules

The interview method is frequently preferable when compared to other research tools. After establishing a good relationship and ensuring trust, the researcher disclosed certain in-depth information that would otherwise remain undisclosed. Furthermore, there was a follow-up process to address any incomplete responses provided by the interviewee. This allowed the interviewer to assess the honesty and accuracy of the respondent's information. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with informants in the field to gather data for the study. The participants consisted of the general public, assistant chiefs, chiefs, and ward administrators, members of the county assembly, sub-county administrators, Assistant county commissioners, police officers, and Deputy county commissioners as indicated in appendix 3.

3.5.3 Observation Checklists

The study incorporated the utilization of observation and photographic evidence by the researcher. The researcher analysed the characteristics of the conflicts in Kakamega and Nandi counties. The observation checklist displayed the direct repercussions of the conflicts on the socio-economic livelihoods of the individuals. Observation was implemented in areas characterized by intense inter-ethnic conflicts as indicated in appendix 5.

3.5.4 Focus Group Discussions

The intended audience for these FGD guides included the following individuals: 2 FGDs for Council of elders composed of 9 members each; 2 FGDs for Non-governmental organizations officials composed of 8 members each; 3 FGDs for Village elders composed of 8 members each and 3 FGDs for Religious leaders composed of 8 members each, totaling to 10 FGDs. FGDs were composed of mixed gender because the discussion at stake was not on gender issues that could bring problems in contribution by all gender.

Table 2

Summary of Study Population, Sample Determination, Techniques, Size and Data collection

S/N	Population	Study Population Size	Sample determination	Sample technique	Sample Size	Data collection
1	Households Heads	157,050	Fisher Formula Mugenda & Mugenda (1999)	Simple Random	384	Questionnaires
2	Key informants					
3	Sub-County Administrators	4	100%	Census	4	Interview
4	Members of County Assembly	8	100%	Census	8	Interview
5	Police Officers	80	50%	Purposive	40	Interview
6	Deputy County Commissioners	4	100%	Census	4	Interview
7	Assistant County Commissioners	8	100%	Census	8	Interview
8	Chiefs	16	100%	Census	16	Interview
9	Ward Administrators	8	100%	Purposive	8	Interview
10	Ass-Chiefs	32	100%	Census	32	Interview
11	Victims of Inter-ethnic Conflicts	180	10%	Systematic Random	18	Interview
12	Perpetrators of Inter-ethnic conflicts	16	100%	Snowball	16	Interview
13	Religious Leaders	240	10%	simple Random	24	3 FGDs
14	NGOs Officials	48	33%	Purposive	16	2 FGDs
15	Council of elders	36	50%	Census	18	2 FGDs
16	Village elders	240	10%	Simple Random	24	3 FGDs
TOTAL		157,970			620	

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

A variety of instruments and techniques were employed to collect precise information from various target groups in order to obtain a thorough comprehension of the challenges at hand. The researcher visited the study area to schedule appointments with Chiefs, Ass-chiefs, and Village Elders. They also met with sampled Council of elders and household heads, Deputy County Commissioner, Assistant County Commissioner, Sub-County Administrator, Religious Leaders, ward Administrators, Members of County Assembly, perpetrators of conflicts, victims of conflicts and Police Officer to prepare for data collection. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaires.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

Both quantitative and qualitative data collected was coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of statistical package for social science (SPSS). To analyze quantitative data, data from the questionnaires was edited, coded and entered into a computer spread sheet in a standard format to allow descriptive statistics analysis. SPSS and MS Excel were used to analyze quantitative data. Measures of central tendency (Mean, Mode, and Median) and frequencies and percentages were used to describe the population. The analyzed data was presented in tables, Bar charts and Pie charts. Ranking was also done to evaluate the extent of inter-ethnic conflicts and mechanisms mitigating inter-ethnic conflicts in the area of study. Frequencies, percentages, median and ranking were done. In analysis, the study followed the procedure of editing, coding, classification and tabulation of raw data (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Cases

of Conflict situations were analyzed with dimensions such as sources, actors and their interests, grievance procedures, and expression of conflict. The implications of these to local planning were discussed in the analytical section.

Qualitative data obtained from Interviews and FGDs was analyzed using thematic narrative techniques. The data from key informants and FGD participants was presented in tables, bar charts and pie charts. Consistent data from the household heads, key informants and FGD participants which was not quantitative in nature but historical or factual was analyzed to come up with recommendations and conclusions of the study.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The household heads were asked if they know socio-economic effects of inter-ethnic conflicts on communities living around Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties. Analysis in Table 3 revealed that majority of the respondents both strongly agree and agree at higher percentages that there is substantial effects of conflicts during inter-ethnic clashes. This is followed by respondents who disagree; who remain undecided and then those who strongly disagree that there are always effects of inter-ethnic conflicts in Kakamega and Nandi Counties. It is therefore evident that majority of the residents agree with the fact that inter-ethnic conflicts cause greater impact to the residents through peace instability each and every time conflict erupts between and among ethnic groups in the study area.

Table 3

Socio-Economic Effects of Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Kubasali Escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi Counties

Effects of inter-ethnic conflicts	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Undecided (U)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	SA+A	Rank
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
Disruption of learning	184(48%)	161(42%)	16(4%)	23(6%)	0(0%)	345 (90%)	2
Loss of property	192(50%)	138(36%)	0(0%)	50(13%)	4(1%)	330 (86%)	3
Loss of lives	162(42%)	142(37%)	65(17%)	0(0%)	15(4%)	304 (79%)	5
Stalled development projects	46(12%)	300(78%)	19(5%)	15(4%)	4(1%)	346 (90%)	1
Loss of livelihood	207(54%)	104(27%)	0(0%)	58(15%)	15(4%)	311 (81%)	4

4.1 Disruption of Learning in Kubasali Escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi Counties

Analysis in the table above establishing that, 184 (48 %) strongly agree that inter-ethnic conflicts disrupt learning in Learning Institutions in Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties, 161 (42%) agree, 16 (4%) were undecided, 23 (6%) disagree, and 0 (0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the fact that inter-ethnic conflicts disrupt learning in the study area ranked number 2.

Those who strongly agreed indicated that inter-ethnic conflicts interfere with the learning process and argued that inter-ethnic conflicts have affected them directly. Those who agreed indicated that, inter-ethnic conflicts have affected learning in the study area. The findings also indicated that a few were undecided; this implied that they either did not know of inter-ethnic conflicts or some of them have not been directly affected. A paltry of the respondents also disagreed on whether inter-ethnic conflicts had interfered with the learning in Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties on a very minimal scale.

A key informant, one Deputy County Commissioner from Kakamega County, stated that:

“Education advancement is very much essential. Therefore, any interference with education in the community is deemed as the dearth of that particular community. Statistics show that majority of inter-ethnic conflicts disrupts learning process since some schools are closed due to insecurity. Even when they are reported little attention is given. Every election for board of management and appointments of head teachers and principals in schools there is an increase of inter-ethnic conflicts and chances of mitigation are minimal” (A key informant, Deputy County Commissioner, 10/09/2024, Kakamega county).

Classical theory of economic growth was applied in the study to back up the findings of a key informant, Deputy County Commissioner, Kakamega County who stated that, Education advancement is very much essential and any interference with education in the community is deemed as the dearth of that particular community. Majority of inter-ethnic conflicts disrupts learning process since some schools are closed due to insecurity. During election for board of management and appointments of head teachers and principals in schools there is an increase of inter-ethnic conflicts and chances of mitigation are minimal. Corroborating the findings of FGD participants, council of elders, many schools are dropping academically in performance due to inter-ethnic conflicts in Kakamega and Nandi counties. Conflicts lead to closure of school because of insecurity of the students and pupils in areas affected by inter-ethnic conflicts. These

cases are chronic in the schools near Kubasali escarpment because the area witnesses frequent conflicts. The security officers are unable to contain this situation and hence this affects schools performance during national examinations. Conflicts have instilled fear in some teachers to work in schools within this study area and most of them are not willing to be transferred to these areas.

To reinforce the findings from a key informant, Assistant Chief, inter-ethnic conflicts affect learning in the area of study and in many occasions, politicians don't support schools to be constructed within Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties. Thus, they feel that the facilities can be destroyed any time conflicts erupt and therefore allocation of funds in these schools is very low. The schools experience poor infrastructure which deny children conducive environment for learning.



Plate 1

Assistant County Commissioner Solving an Inter-ethnic Conflict at in a Secondary School in Nandi North Sub-County

In the plate 1 above, the one addressing students was the Assistant County commissioner solving an inter-ethnic conflict in a secondary school where the parents had chased principal away because they need a principal from their ethnic group. This plate was given by Assistant County Commissioner as secondary data.

Losey (2011) state that clashes result in the closure of learning institutions which included primary and secondary schools. The inter-ethnic conflict among the Kuria caused closure of schools that resulted in a drop in school attendance which further resulted in a drop of performance as reflected in the KCSE and KCPE results in various schools in the district. However due to the current prevailing peace in the district the performance in exams is expected to improve as well as an increase in enrolment numbers in the Schools as denoted by (Losey, 2011). There are threats in Nigeria by Boko Haram radical groups with the high profile kidnapping and abduction of school girls in Chibok.

4.2 Loss of Property during Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Kubasali Escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi Counties

Data was descriptively analyzed on the effects of inter-ethnic conflicts on loss of property in Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties. The results revealed that 192 (50%) of the majority strongly agreed that residents of Kakamega and Nandi counties lost property during the inter-ethnic conflicts. Other respondents 138 (36%) agree, 0 (0%) undecided, 50 (13%) disagree while 4 (1%) strongly disagreed that residents lose substantial amount of property during the inter-ethnic Conflicts in Kakamega and Nandi counties ranked number 3.

A key informant, a victim of inter-ethnic conflicts had the following to say;

“Our businesses have been destroyed, we have lost a lot of property and we have been troubled by endless inter-ethnic conflicts in Kubasali escarpment. There is need of the government to intervene and resolve these conflicts amicably to give way for socio-economic development. People from the two ethnic groups are complaining that their property has been vandalized during conflicts and apparently no one is compensating them. They call upon the government to take responsibility so that they can move on with life. Some people are homeless because their houses have been burned during the conflicts and need assistance from humanitarian bodies” (A key informant, a victim of inter-ethnic conflicts, 13/08/2024, Kakamega County).

Classical theory of economic growth was applied to back up the findings from a key informant, a victim of inter-ethnic conflicts who averred that, businesses have been destroyed and a lot of property has been lost by endless inter-ethnic conflicts in Kubasali escarpment. There is need of the government to intervene and resolve these conflicts amicably to give way for socio-economic development. People from the two ethnic groups complain that, their property has been vandalized during conflicts and apparently no one is compensating them. The government should take responsibility so that, they can move on with life. Some people are homeless because their houses have been burned during the conflicts and need assistance from humanitarian bodies.

In favour of the findings of a key informant, a victim of inter-ethnic conflict, a lot of property is lost during inter-ethnic conflicts citing the incident in Ndulele Sub-location where an inter-ethnic conflict between Luhya and Nandi was witnessed and houses were burned to ashes, as presented in plate 1. During election period, a lot of property is destroyed especially in Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties. Many people are left homeless hence, rescued by the World Vision Kenya by providing them with shelter, food and water.

Substantiating the findings from Shiasaba FGD participants, council of elders, during inter-ethnic conflicts, a lot of property is looted in homes ranging from household goods, animals and the youth are the main perpetrators of this act since they are idle and jobless. They use this chance for material gain. They target people who don't belong to their ethnic group and these incidents take place in all areas within Kubasali escarpment affecting the socio-economic development of these areas.

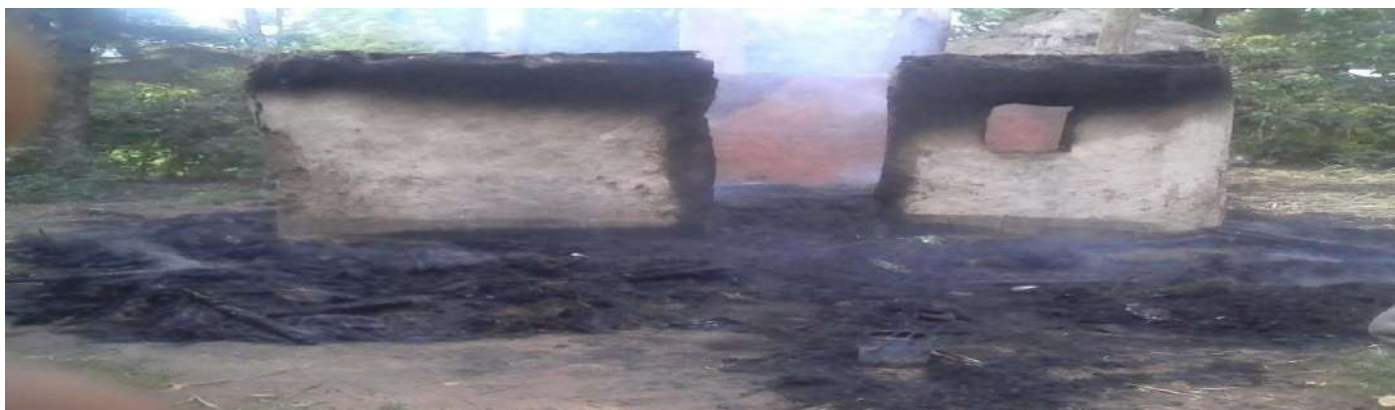


Plate 2

A House Burned to Ashes due to Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Ndulele Sub-Location

A house burned to ashes during an inter-conflict between Luhya and Nandi in Ndulele sub-location over land Boundary. The plate was provided by one key informant, a ward Administrator as secondary data.



Plate 3

Animals Belonging to a Farmer from Nandi County Destroying Crops Belonging to a Farmer in Ikoli Sub-Location in Kakamega County

Animals belonging to a farmer from Nandi County destroying crops belonging to a farmer in Ikoli sub-location in Kakamega County, leading to inter-ethnic conflict between Luhya and Nandi in Ikoli sub-location. The plate was provided by one key informant, an assistant chief as secondary data.

These responses attest to the fact that the local residents have experienced incessant problems emanating from property destruction. They cry foul that little has been done to compensate them. This has escalated inter-ethnic conflicts between Luhya and Nandi ethnic groups. Conflicts when not handled properly they are like the banana stem cut, they will spring up again. Therefore, the government ought to engage properly in averting as well as managing inter-ethnic conflict. When people's businesses are destroyed it means that their sources of livelihood are destroyed too. Consequently, this creates pressure on the existing resources thus augmenting the resource-based conflict.

In support of the findings, Matanga (2010) indicated that inter-ethnic conflicts have at best precluded people from developing their bountiful human and natural potential through acquired resources. At worst, the inter-ethnic conflicts have given rise to conditions of near hopelessness. Clans in Mumias East have co-existed peacefully since their migrations and settlement. They have traded, intermarried and shared many social festivals. However, the clans have experienced unending conflicts spanning two or more decades despite existence of institutions that ought to have solved the conflicts. These conflicts have had far reaching consequences on their lives and property and therefore exacerbating peace efforts and reconciliation of families (Field Data, 2024).

However, in recent years, due to the proliferation of modern arms, commercialization of livestock raiding, banditry, political incitements, dispute over land tenure rights, the cultural practice has become a widespread, sophisticated, more violent, and destructive activity among pastoral communities in northern regions of Kenya as noted by (Moe 2010). The proliferation of modern automatic weapons is well documented as having had a negative effect on the scale and impact of armed violence in pastoral communities as noted by Kamoet (2011) indicated that commercialized livestock raiding in which wealthy businessmen, politicians, traders and local people pursue economic objectives has interfered with pastoral livelihoods and contributed to conflicts among pastoral communities.

4.3 Loss of Lives during Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Kakamega and Nandi Counties

The study sought to assess the effects of inter-ethnic conflicts on loss of lives in Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties. The results revealed that 162 (42%) of the majority strongly agreed that residents of Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties lost lives during the inter-ethnic conflicts. Other respondents 142 {37%} agree, 0 (0%) undecided, 65 (17%) disagree while 15 (4%) strongly disagreed that residents lost lives during the inter-ethnic Conflicts in Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties ranked number 5.

A village elder in an FGD signposted that;

“During inter-ethnic conflicts, a lot of lives are lost in homes in Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega County and most households have lost lives of their people. The perpetrators target people who are active in fights from the other ethnic groups. They also said that these incidences of malicious killings take place in all

areas within Kubasali escarpment and it has really affected the socio-economic development of these areas for a long time” (Participants of an FGD, village elders, 29/09/2024, Kakamega East sub-county).

In affirmation of the findings Interpretivism philosophical approach was applied to analyse qualitative data of a key informant, a chief who stated that, people have been disrupted and lost lives by endless inter-ethnic conflicts in Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties for a long time. Classical theory of economic growth was applied in the study to urge the government to intervene and resolve these conflicts amicably to give way for socio-economic development by giving people security of life. People from the two ethnic groups complain that, people’s lives have been lost during conflicts and apparently no one is compensating them. The government should take responsibility so that people can move on with life peacefully. Some people have disappeared for a long time after these conflicts and nobody knows their whereabouts. The most affected groups are the youths who are the productive age in the society hence, affecting the socio-economic development of Kakamega and Nandi counties.

Substantiating the findings of Participants of an FGD, village elders, during inter-ethnic conflicts, a lot of lives are lost in homes in Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega County and most households have lost lives of their people. The perpetrators target people who are active in fighting from the other ethnic groups. The incidences of malicious killings take place in all areas within Kubasali escarpment and have really affected the socio-economic development of these areas for a long time.

To reinforce the findings, Séverine (2008) indicated that inter-ethnic conflicts have at best precluded people from developing their bountiful human and natural potential through acquired resources. At worst, the inter-ethnic conflicts have given rise to conditions of near hopelessness. Clans in Mumias East have co-existed peacefully since their migrations and settlement. They have traded, intermarried and shared many social festivals. However, the clans have experienced unending conflicts spanning two or more decades despite existence of institutions that ought to have solved the conflicts. These conflicts have had far reaching consequences on their lives and property and therefore exacerbating peace efforts and reconciliation of families (Field Data, 2024).

4.4 Stalled Development Projects during Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Kubasali Escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi Counties

The analysis of stalled development projects during inter-ethnic conflicts indicate that, majority of the respondents 46 (12%) strongly agree that, a number of projects in the study area stalled due to inter-ethnic conflicts. This is followed by 300 (78%) of the respondents who agreed, 19 (5%) disagree, 15 (4%) undecided, and 4 (1%) strongly disagreed about the stalling of development projects as a result of inter-ethnic conflicts in Kakamega and Nandi counties ranked number 1. Therefore, the results indicate that inter-ethnic conflicts stalls development in the area of study.

A key informant, a chief stated that;

“Projects in Kakamega and Nandi counties stall because of frequent inter-ethnic conflicts in Kubasali escarpment. Those who may want to invest in projects fear because they don’t want to put their funds in areas where the projects constructed can be destroyed. He gave an example of Kipsamoite market which was destroyed during endless inter-ethnic conflicts in 2017 and up to now no business is going in that market. The county government of Nandi had invested a lot of money in the project” (A key informant, a chief, 21/09/2024, Nandi North sub-county).

Therefore, the results indicate that inter-ethnic conflicts stalls development in the area of study. In favour of the findings from participants, most projects in Kakamega and Nandi counties within Kubasali escarpment have stalled due to rampant inter-ethnic conflicts between the Nandi and Luhya ethnic groups hence, inter-group contact theory was applied in the study to give room for public participation to allow people own the projects to reduce resistance to pave way for socio-economic development. Schools near Kubasali escarpment are underdeveloped due frequent destruction of the infrastructure during inter-ethnic conflicts. Some perpetrators loot essential equipment in schools and the sponsors are discouraged to invest in such institutions. Stalling of construction of Lukhokho health centre where the neighbours from Nandi County claimed that, where the facility was constructed is in their ancestral land which let to stalling of that project from 2019 up to date. The government should intervene because the residents are suffering by travelling for long distances for treatment and most of them loose life while seeking for treatment

To back up the findings of a key informant, a chief, projects in Kakamega and Nandi counties stall because of frequent inter-ethnic conflicts in Kubasali escarpment. Investor in projects fear to invest because they don’t want to put their funds in areas where the projects constructed can be destroyed at any time. An example of Kipsamoite market was destroyed during endless inter-ethnic conflicts in 2017 and up to now no business is going in that market and the County government of Nandi had invested a lot of money in the project. Corroborating the findings of a key informant, Deputy County Commissioner, Kakamega county, development Projects in Kakamega and Nandi counties stall because of frequent inter-ethnic conflicts within Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties. Land boundaries and ownership are the major causes of inter-ethnic conflicts and also a major challenge where projects can be established within Kubasali escarpment. In most cases whenever a project is proposed or sets off, people from a certain ethnic group

arise and complains forcing that project to stop. This cut across all the projects in Kubasali escarpment in almost all departments.

The finding agreed with the CDF report that there is stalling of development projects and poor completion of projects especially the CDF projects in Kakamega and Nandi counties. The affected projects were Mumias East Technical Training College, Khaunga Police post and Malaha Administration Police post Mumias East CDF report of 2016. The inter-ethnic conflicts also led to the collapse of Mumias Sugar Company overtime which was the major source of livelihood of the people of Mumias East and the poverty level has increased to a great extent, Mumias Sugar annual general meetings in 2014. Citizens believed that it was the duty of the government to prevent conflicts in Kenya yet they failed to do so in Kakamega and Nandi counties and hence prevalence of conflicts.

4.5 Effects on Livelihoods during Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Kubasali Escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties

The results show that, majority of the respondents 207 (54%) strongly agreed, followed by 104 (27%) who agreed, 0 (0%) undecided, 58 (15%) disagreed and 15 (4%) strongly disagreed that inter-ethnic conflicts impacts on different livelihoods whenever the conflicts occur and reoccur. The finding strongly indicates that the livelihood of the people is affected by inter-ethnic conflicts in the area of study ranked number 4.

A key informant, an Assistant county commissioner from Nandi County said that;

“Inter-ethnic conflicts has led to some people to losing livelihood because, in the course of the conflicts people loss livelihood from both ethnic groups from Kakamega and Nandi counties since they cannot have peace to work or do business to earn a living. He said that a lot of inter-ethnic conflicts between the Luhya and Nandi ethnic groups have been frequently reported where people loss livelihood regularly. Reports from occurrence books from police stations in the four selected sub-counties, that’s , Kakamega East, Kakamega North, Nandi North, and Chesumei indicates that, loss of livelihood have been witnessed during inter-ethnic conflicts between the Luhya and Nandi ethnic groups in Kakamega and Nandi counties”. (A key informant, Assistant County Commissioner, Nandi North sub-county²⁰ September 2024)

In affiliation of the findings by a key informant, Assistant county commissioner, inter-ethnic conflicts have led to some people losing livelihood because, in the course of the conflicts people loss livelihood from both ethnic groups from Kakamega and Nandi counties since they cannot have peace to work or do business to earn a living. Reports from occurrence books from police stations in the four selected sub-counties, that’s , Kakamega East, Kakamega North, Nandi North, and Chesumei indicates that, loss of livelihood have been witnessed during inter-ethnic conflicts between the Luhya and Nandi ethnic groups in Kakamega and Nandi counties. As a result of all these, conflict transformation theory should be applied in the study to come up with effective strategies of solving inter-ethnic conflicts for socio-economic development.

The findings are consistent with Prasad (2010) opine that, livelihood failure can contribute to the emergence of conflict by weakening the social fabric of a community making people resort to inter-ethnic violence in order to obtain necessary resources, and increasing individuals’ vulnerability to those with an interest in promoting conflicts for political or economic gain. At the same time, conflict is a major threat to livelihoods. Conflict restricts or blocks access to one or more of these assets. When this happens, people try to find other ways of obtaining those resources, or compensate for the loss of one resource by intensifying their efforts to secure another. The foregoing is corroborated by studies of Peters (2009) who avers that resource competition has led to others migrating to towns in search of new opportunities and alternative means of livelihoods. With the new competition over economic opportunities, political power emerges with each clans fighting to have a larger share of political power. Conflicts then erupt and what was economic in nature take a new face and becomes politically instigated.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2 Conclusion

The overall conclusion is that, persistent Inter-ethnic conflicts have got negative influence on socio-economic development in Kubasali escarpment in Kakamega and Nandi counties affecting the social networks in terms of business, education, health, agriculture and security with a few positive impacts. This has affected the livelihood of the residents of Kubasali escarpment for a long time without proper interventions.

5.1 Recommendations

The study recommends that, a study should be conducted on the alternative dispute resolutions such as conciliation, reconciliation and civil disobedience to provide everlasting solutions of peace in the study area. The study recommends improved working relationship between the local residents, NGOs, civil society and the ethnic groups to



make peace initiatives more effective and address various concerns of the ethnic groups to mitigate occurrences of inter-ethnic conflicts in the study area to give room for socio-economic development.

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